

already sufficiently confused synonymy. An appeal to an author older than Linnæus may be useful to fix a species; but the danger of making any exceptions to the rigid limit of 1767 in adopting specific names is so great, that it appears most desirable to refuse the claims of all previous authors. In a few cases, however, they may be admitted without danger. For example, Clerck figured a *Papilio hylas* in 1764, not noticed by Linnæus. Hübner and Godart figured and described another species under that name, which they mistook for *Hylas*, Clerck. Westwood restores the name *Hylas* to Clerck's insect, and gives a new name to the other species. Still it is doubtful whether it would not have been better to rename Clerck's insect, rather than to admit the claims of an author previous to 1767.

It is uncertain whether names published without characters, subsequently to 1767, but referring to figures or descriptions published previously to that year, and which are sufficient to fix the species, ought to be accepted; but there is no reason why they should not. For instance, Rottensburg, in 1775, applied names to several species recognizably described without scientific names by Geoffroy in 1762. There seems no reason why these names should not claim priority over subsequent descriptions; but I am not aware that the point has ever been discussed, although these names of Rottensburg's are now accepted by the German entomologists.

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On the occurrence of *Astraptor illuminator*, Murray, or a closely allied insect, near Buenos Ayres. By ROLAND TRIMEN, Mem. Ent. Soc. Lond. (Communicated by HENRY TRIMEN, M.B., F.L.S.)

[Read November 4, 1869.]

Cape Town, July 16, 1869.

IN 'The Journal of the Linnean Society,' vol. x. No. 42, there appeared an interesting paper, by Mr. Andrew Murray, on an undescribed light-giving Coleopterous larva, provisionally named *Astraptor illuminator*, which was found near Rio de Janeiro.

On perusing the account (p. 77) of the larva's appearance when alive, I was immediately reminded of the description of a "caterpillar" given to me a few years ago by the Rev. Canon Ogilvie, Principal of the Diocesan College near Cape Town. Mr. Ogilvie, for some time before coming to the Cape, resided

at Buenos Ayres; and it was there, about twelve years ago, that he observed the singular larva in question.

Without communicating to Mr. Ogilvie the contents of Mr. Murray's paper, I wrote to him for such particulars as he might be able to furnish respecting the caterpillar of which he had formerly told me; and it is by his permission that I convey to the Society the brief note that follows.

The larva was brought to Mr. Ogilvie by one of his pupils, who had found it in some part of the Montevidean State. It was kept alive for two or three weeks, in the hope that it would assume the pupal condition, but at length died, probably for want of food. Mr. Ogilvie further states:—"As far as I remember, it looked by daylight like an ordinary grub. It was, I think, a little over 2 inches in length, and of a dark brownish colour. When put to travel across the table in a dark room, it looked exactly like a miniature railway-train. The head was lit up with a reddish light, and the tail with a greenish one; and at the point where each of its legs was joined to the body there was a tiny globe of white light."

This account so nearly agrees with that given by Mr. Fry (as recorded by Mr. Murray), that there can be no doubt of the close alliance, if not species-identity of the insects concerned. The only differences to be noticed are the much larger size of the Montevidean larva, and Mr. Ogilvie's mention of a "greenish" instead of a *white* light at the tail. As regards the latter character, it should be observed that Mr. Ogilvie writes from memory only; but my own observations lead me to think that the light emitted by luminous insects, when not seen through any intervening substance, is always of a greenish tinge; and in the case of this larva, the greenish lustre may have been more apparent from the contrast with the red light at the head. On the question of size, however, Mr. Ogilvie states, after an inspection of the plate accompanying Mr. Murray's paper, that his specimen was "certainly larger;" and, considering Mr. Murray's observations on the probability of *Astraptor* being the larva of *Pyrophorus*, the greater size of the Montevidean specimen tends to strengthen his view that this splendidly adorned grub may be the earlier condition of *P. noctilucus*.

R. TRIMEN.